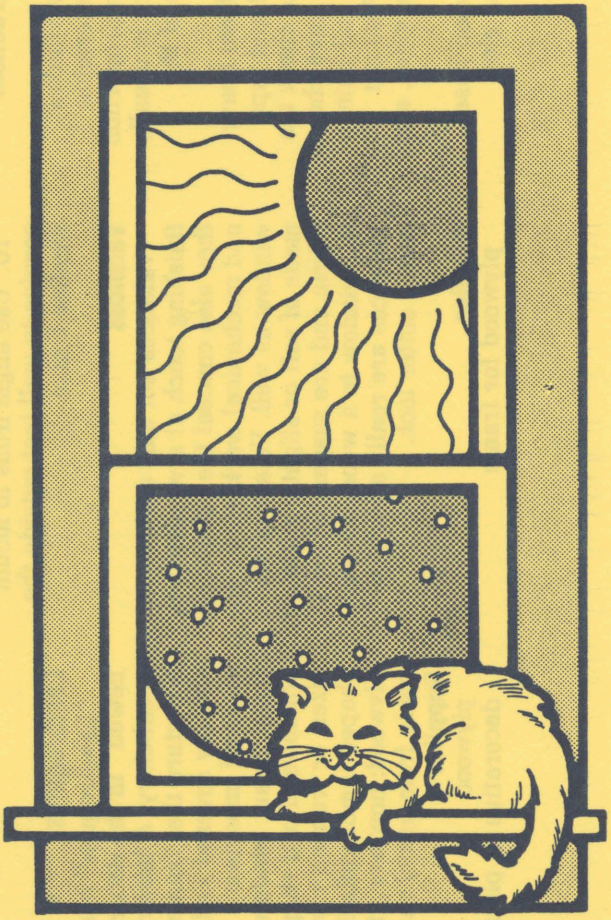
1983

Cornices, Valances and Lambrequins

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

FS 778

Cornices, valances and lambrequins



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Cornices, valances and lambrequins

Whatever way you decorate your windows, you can gain added energy efficiency by adding a cornice, valance, or lambrequin.

All of these treatments are designed to reduce heat loss due to convection by enclosing the top of the window treatment and the window frame. The lambrequin also encloses the sides of the window (Fig 4).

The type of treatment you choose will depend on the mood you wish to set in the room and how much you want to spend on materials. To get an idea what each of these treatments would do for your window, cut patterns out of cardboard before you invest your time and money on the actual project.

Cornices

Cornices are frames, usually made of wood or a stiffly woven and coated fabric called buckram or permette (Fig 1 and 2). The directions are for wooden cornice construction.

Supplies

¼-inch plywood
decorator or plain fabric
fusible mesh
lining fabric
angle irons
nails, glue

Directions for construction: cornice

1. Measure inside window width and length. Determine length for cornice in proportion to window. A cornice is usually 1/9 to 1/6 the length of the window.
2. Cut a pattern from heavy paper or cardboard and tape above the window to check the design and size you have chosen.
3. Cut the fabric and lining, using this pattern. Also cut plywood to form top, sides, and front of cornice.
4. Assemble plywood base, using small nails and glue.

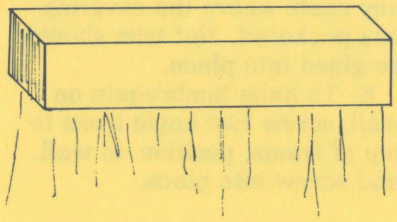


Fig 1. Plain cornice.

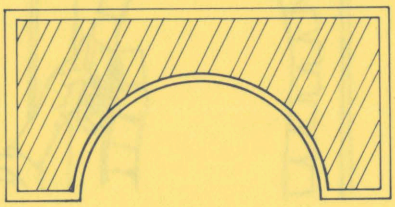


Fig 2. Decorative cornice with contrasting fabric binding.

5. Fuse fabric to lining with a fusible mesh (to prevent wood from showing through the cornice fabric).
6. Cut bias strip that is 1-inch (2.5 cm) wide to go around all cornice edges (for decorative cornice, as in Fig 2).
7. Sew right side of strip to right side of cornice using ¼-inch (6 mm) seam (Fig 2).
8. Clip curves and turn strips to back, mitering corners. Adhere to plywood cornice with glue.
9. For a finishing touch, cover the entire back with fabric, using the glue.
10. Use angle irons to mount cornice to wall just outside the window frame.

Valances

Valances not only add a finishing touch at a window but they also conceal the hardware and mechanical workings of the window as well. Valances are made of soft or slightly stiffened fabric and are suspended over the window in a wooden frame. Valances are really a cornice with a softer look.

Supplies

plywood for frame
decorative or plain fabric
angle irons for hanging
drapery hooks (pleated valance)
heavy-duty staples (pleated valance)
lining fabric (bubble valance)
cord for piping (bubble valance)

Directions for construction: pleated valance

1. A pleated valance is treated the same way as a very short drapery.
2. The valance can be attached to a mounting board using drapery hooks which fasten into staples on the edge of the board.
3. A pleat should be positioned on the corners of the valance. Pinch or box pleats or shirring may be used for the valance.
4. The valance may be perfectly straight, with or without trim.

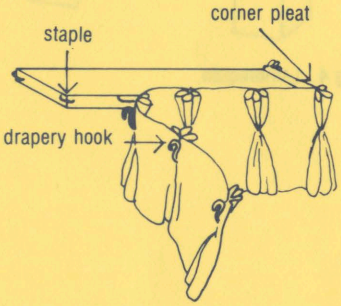


Fig 3. Pleated valance.

Lambrequins

"Lambrequin" has been "renewed" in the decorating vocabulary. A lambrequin is a structure that frames a window. Usually covered and trimmed, it can add importance to insignificant windows, unify windows of odd shapes and sizes, or frame a view. Ideally, a shaped lambrequin is made of plywood; however, it can be made from heavy cardboard.

Supplies

plywood
decorative or plain fabric

staples and staple gun
glue
foam for padding (optional)
angle irons for hanging

Directions for construction: lambrequin

1. Cut plywood into desired shapes (Fig 4 is a plain one).
2. Glue and nail plywood together to form frame, sand.
3. Cut fabric so that it will extend 2 inches larger than frame. If you are using foam padding, you should also cut it 2 inches larger than frame.

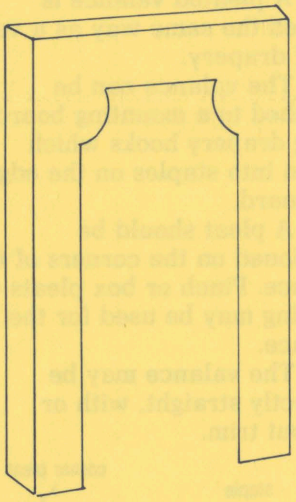


Fig 4. Lambrequin.

4. Clip curves and corner. Turn to back; tack or staple to frame, pulling cover smooth (Fig 5).
5. Trimming neatly conceals any spots where the covering has puckered. Flat trim should be glued into place.
6. To hang lambrequin on wall, screw two angle irons to top of frame, position on wall, and screw into place.

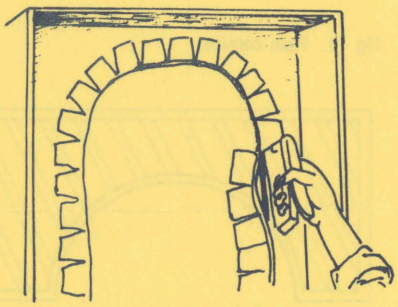


Fig 5. Staple fabric to frame.

Variations

As many variations on these basic directions exist for cornices, valances, and lambrequins as your imagination can conceive.

1. Use different fabrics—an easy way to change appearances easily. Pad or quilt the fabric. Would adding some stitchery make the window really special?
2. Wide framing or molding can be used for the face and sides of a cornice. This requires mitering the corners, but does give a more elegant appearance.
3. If framing or good quality wood is used for cornices and lambrequins, they can be finished with a clear finish or painted instead of covering with fabric. Paint is easier to keep clean than fabric.

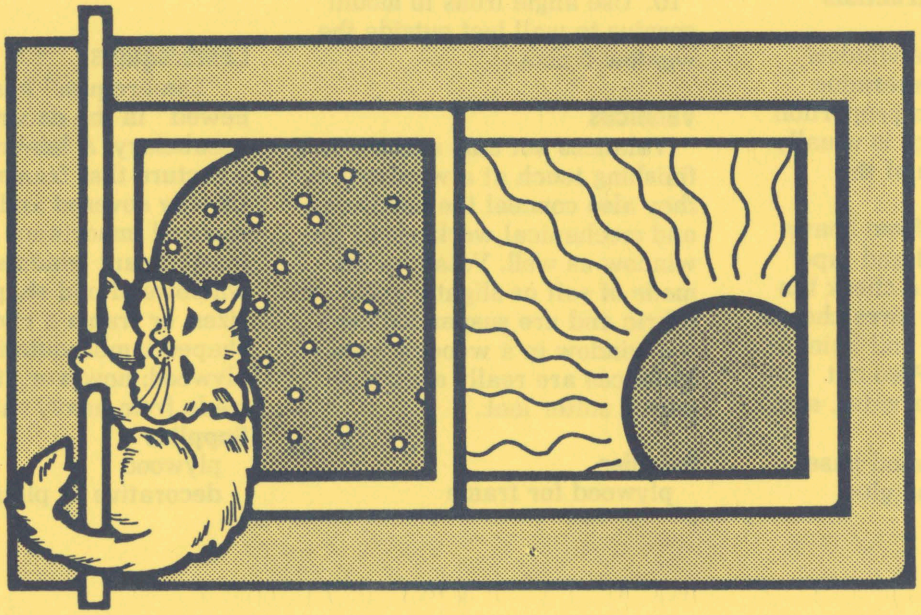
Fact sheets in this series

FS 776, Energy-efficient window treatments
FS 777, Energy-efficient draperies
FS 778, Cornices and lambrequins
FS 779, Insulated Roman shades
FS 780, Insulated shutters and panels

For more information, contact Grace Backman, Extension housing specialist, SDSU. This fact sheet prepared by Mary Ann Sward, former housing specialist, from information supplied by Julia B. Taylor and Naomi H. Willis, Clemson University.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the USDA, Hollis D. Hall, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, SDSU, Brookings. Educational programs and materials offered without regard to age, race, color, religion, sex, handicap or national origin. An Equal Opportunity Employer.

File: 12.9-5—1.5M—6-83mb—ES 087.



Cornices, valances and lambrequins

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE